



Stu Clark

NEW VENTURE CHAMPIONSHIPS

Official Rule Document

Graduate and Undergraduate

Last updated: March 24, 2026

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1. General Competition Information for Graduate and Undergraduate

a. Important Dates

Item	Date
Deadline to apply (executive summaries due)	Tuesday March 10, 2026 9:00 PM CT
Teams informed of acceptance	Thursday March 19, 2026 2:00 PM CT
Video pitch due	Tuesday April 7, 2026 11:59 PM CT
Written business plan due	Tuesday April 21 2026 11:59 PM CT
Slide decks due	Tuesday April 28, 2026 11:59 PM CT
Competition	Thursday April 30 – Saturday May 2, 2026

b. Introduction

The Stu Clark New Venture Championships is a business plan competition hosted by the Stu Clark Centre for Entrepreneurship located in the Asper School of Business at the University of Manitoba and is an exhilarating 3-day high-energy competition focused on entrepreneurship and student innovation.

Teams will compete with both their business plans and video pitches for over \$72, 000 in cash prizes.

A written business plan and a recorded video pitch will be sent before the competition, and at the competition there will be live business plan presentations.

This competition is open to all undergraduate and graduate students and has both undergrad and graduate level tracks.

c. Prize Allotment & Disbursement

Business Plan Competition	Graduate Level	Undergraduate Level
First Place	\$20,000	\$10,000
Second Place	\$10,000	\$5,000
Third Place	\$5,000	\$2,500
Fourth Place	\$2,500	\$1,500
Honourable Mention Award	\$1,000	\$1,000
Honourable Mention Award	\$1,000	\$1,000
Honourable Mention Award	\$1,000	\$1,000
Honourable Mention Award	\$1,000	\$1,000

Video Pitch Competition	Graduate Level	Undergraduate Level
First Place	\$1,500	\$1,000
Second Place	\$1,000	\$750
Third Place	\$750	\$500

NVC Social Entrepreneurship Award	Graduate Level	Undergraduate Level
First Place	\$1,500	\$1,000

Prize Money Disbursement:

The NVC will issue prize funds either directly to an incorporated and registered business or to one designated lead team member. If the lead team member represents a team, it is their responsibility to distribute the funds among team members as agreed upon within the team. Prize funds will not be split or paid individually to multiple team members by the NVC. Please be advised that prize payments issued from Canada may have tax implications in both Canada and the United States. Recipients are responsible for understanding and meeting any reporting or payment obligations in their country of residence.

2. Eligibility

a. Graduate Student Eligibility

<p>Who can compete</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-time or part-time graduate students (all programs, including PhD) enrolled this academic year. <p>Team size</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1–5 members per team. Individual entries allowed. <p>Advisor requirement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each team must have a faculty/staff advisor endorsement. • Advisor contact info required, even if not attending. • Advisor ensures the team follows rules and may confirm eligibility. <p>Undergraduate participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowed if the majority of the team are graduate students. <p>Multi-university teams</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must select one university for application and presentation. <p>Venture requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New ideas encouraged! • Previous ventures allowed only if significant progress has been made and they did not qualify for the championship round. Contact the organizer first. <p>Enrollment requirement</p>

- All team members must have been enrolled at some point this academic year (typically September–August).

b. Undergraduate Student Eligibility

Who can compete

- Full-time or part-time undergraduate students enrolled this academic year.

Team size

- 1–5 members per team. Individual entries are allowed.

Venture role

- Students must have played a major role in conceiving the venture.

Eligible programs

- Open to students from all undergraduate programs.

Advisor requirement

- Each team must have a faculty/staff advisor endorsement.
- Advisor contact info required, even if not attending.
- Advisor ensures the team follows rules and may confirm eligibility.

Multi-university teams

- Must select one university for application and presentation.

Venture requirements

- New ideas encouraged!
- Previous ventures allowed only if significant progress has been made and they did not qualify for the championship round. Contact the organizer first.

Enrollment requirement

- All team members must have been enrolled at some point this academic year (typically September–August).

3. General Notices for both Graduate and Undergraduate

- Final Decisions:** Not every circumstance can be anticipated therefore The NVC Competition Director reserves the right to disqualify or penalize any team that violates the rules, regulations, or the spirit of the competition. Any unique circumstance regarding applications or the competition will be adjudicated by the NVC Competition Director.
- Penalty for Team Withdrawal:** If a team decides to withdraw from the competition prior to March 30, 2026, the university will face disqualification from participating in the NVC for a duration of one year. Additionally, a formal notification will be sent to the Dean and faculty advisors to inform them of this breach.
- Use of Materials:** By participating in the NVC, you agree that the Stu Clark Centre for Entrepreneurship may use photographs, video recordings, and other event materials (including video pitches) for promotional and educational purposes. We will only use these materials in ways that celebrate your work and highlight the competition.
- Privacy Policy:** As some aspects of this competition are open to the public, data or information discussed or divulged throughout the competition is considered

information that will enter the public domain, therefore teams requiring non-disclosure agreements (NDA's) should not participate. The NVC Judges are also prepped to not share or distribute any information or ideas they review. Any footage of the event can be used in marketing, PR and promotional materials.

- e. **Nature of Ventures:** Ventures must be intended as operating companies with corporate structures and financial statements that reflect real operating revenues and expenses. This excludes investment vehicles, partnerships, franchises, licensing arrangements, and other pass-through entities where returns are measured by investment value rather than operating earnings.
- f. **Other Restrictions:** The competition focuses on new, independent ventures in the seed, startup or early growth stages. Ventures cannot be buy-outs, expansions of existing companies, roll-ups, real estate syndications, tax shelters, franchise outlets, licensing agreements for distribution in a new geographical area or corporate spinouts.
- g. **University Licensed Technology:** Licensing technologies from universities or research labs is encouraged assuming there has been no previous commercialization. The key to this type of technology is demonstrating significant added value to the technology.
- h. **Faculty Advisor:** The faculty advisor may be contacted to attest to the eligibility of the team and is responsible for the participating team adheres to the rules and guidelines and acknowledges potential penalties for violations and infractions.
- i. **Special Notices:** If a team needs to request approval for a special situation or exception to these rules or guidelines, the team point of contact should submit in writing explaining the situation to amy.jones@umanitoba.ca for review.
- j. **Eligibility Questions:** Teams that have any questions about their eligibility should contact amy.jones@umanitoba.ca.

4. Application Process for Graduate and Undergraduate

a. Steps:

- All applications must be submitted online through the Startup Tree portal (Apply button located on NVC website)
- Create a 1 – 2-page executive summary.
- Submit application form by March 10, 2026 (9:00 PM CT)

5. Submission Guidelines for Graduate and Undergraduate

- a. The executive summary must be submitted in Adobe Acrobat PDF format and named using this format: **ES_VentureName_UniversityName.pdf**
- b. The executive summary will be uploaded to the Venture's Startup Tree application.
- c. Executive summaries will be judged on the aspects below. Failure to include one of the items below will result in a score of 0.
 - Outline of the magnitude of the problem
 - Outline of the solution
 - Market validation
 - Financial projections
 - Scalability

- d. **Page Limit:** Executive summaries should be 1 – 2 pages in length **plus** a cover page. Any pages after the 3-page limit will not be considered.

The cover page should list.

- Venture Name
- Name of University
- Student name and contact information
- Advisor name and contact information

- e. **Font and formatting:** Use 12-point font, 1.5 line spacing, and 1-inch margins on all sides. The line spacing requirement applies only to the main text of the document; graphs, tables, worksheets, and images may be formatted differently for clarity.

6. Submission Guidelines – Written Business Plan (Graduate and Undergraduate)

- a. The written business plan must be submitted in Adobe Acrobat PDF format and named using this format: **BP_VentureName_UniversityName.pdf**

- b. The written business plan should be emailed to amy.jones@umanitoba.ca.

c. **Required Content:**

- **1 page – Cover Page**
 - Venture Name, University Name, Student names & emails, Faculty advisor name and contact.
- **1 page – Table of Contents** (optional)
- **1 -2 pages – Executive Summary**
- **Up to 10 pages– Main Report**
- **Up to 6 pages – Appendices**
- **1 page – Citations**

- d. **Page Limit:** The written business plan must not exceed 21 pages in total, following the format above. Plans with fewer than 6 pages of appendices may not reallocate unused pages to increase the length of the Main Report.

- e. **Font and Formatting:** Use 12-point font, 1.5 line spacing, and 1-inch margins on all sides. The line spacing requirement applies only to the main text of the document; graphs, tables, worksheets, and images may be formatted differently for clarity. All pages should be numbered.

f. **Suggested Guidelines:**

- Executive Summary
 - Standalone overview of the business
- Magnitude of the Problem
 - Is this a major problem? National, local or global?
- Outline of the Solution
 - Does the product solve the problem
 - Is the product /service protected (IP)
 - Current status (proof of concept / prototype)
- Market validation / competition
 - Is there a clear market need?

- Will customers pay a premium?
- Competitive landscape
- Operational plan
 - Actual intent to set up operations
 - Viable plan to set up operations
 - Ongoing operational capability
- Marketing and distribution
 - Effective marketing strategy
 - Effective advertising strategy
 - Clear distribution channels / strategy
- Management team
 - Experienced and capable team
 - Ability to overcome risks and changes
 - Proper board or advisory board in place
- Financial viability / scalability
 - Attractive revenue / expense margins
 - Realistic start-up costs
 - Scalable product or service
 - Financial projections / returns
 - No major cash flow or balance sheet issues
 - Realistic funding / capital structure
 - Attractive investor returns
- Other Considerations
 - Intellectual property
 - Implementation timeline
 - Professional and realistic presentation
 - Convincing overall strategy

7. Video Pitch Competition

- a. What is it?** The purpose of this video pitch is to communicate a compelling message about a product / service in **1 minute**. It should be concise, persuasive, and capture the judges' attention while leaving a lasting impression. The goal is to convey key information, spark interest, and encourage further engagement.
- b.** Teams will submit their video pitch before the NVC, and all videos will be shown on a large screen at the Welcome Reception. Some teams choose a commercial-style format, while others take a more formal approach, we welcome creativity!
- c. How to name your video pitch:** Videos must be shot in landscape format and in .mp4 or .mov file format and named as **VP_VentureName_UniversityName.mp4**
- d. Where to upload:** Email all video pitches to amy.jones@umanitoba.ca. If your file is too large to send by email some alternate options are WeTransfer or dropbox or google drive and direct them to amy.jones@umanitoba.ca
- e. Guidelines:**

- Remember first and foremost it's about your content.
 - Are you clearly stating your problem, solution and is there a market?
 - Are you leaving the judges wanting to know more?
 - Secondly, it's about creativity.
 - Get creative by using images, videos, prototype demonstrations, music, testimonials etc.
- f. Time Limit:** Videos are 1 minute pitch hard stop. Any additional footage extending past the one-minute mark will not be viewed by the judges.
- g. Rules:**
- **Student Presence (Required):**
At least one student must appear on screen speaking about the venture. Voiceovers are not permitted. The judges must be able to see the speaker. Multiple team members may participate.
 - **Time:** The video can be no longer than 1 minute.
 - **Format:** Shot in landscape format in .mp4 or .mov file format
 - **Presentation Style:** Teams are encouraged to present themselves in a way that reflects their venture and pitch style, whether that's professional attire, branded clothing, or a creative approach.
- h. Recommendation:**
- Watch last year's video pitches to inspire you at this link
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vE8XHB390gY>

8. Business Plan Presentation

All teams will present their business plan at the competition in front of a set of judges in a business plan presentation format. Teams will be required to send their slide deck prior to the competition.

IMPORTANT: During your presentation, please make sure to cover all the key points of your business plan. At the end, clearly articulate your ASK—what you are seeking from the judging panel. This could be a financial request or another specific need. Remember, you are pitching to secure something. You can also mention how you would use the prize money as part of your ASK.

a. Semi Final Business Plan Competition Format:

- 15-minute presentation
- 10-minute Q & A
- 5-minute feedback

All times are strictly enforced—once the buzzer sounds, teams and judges must immediately stop speaking.

b. Championship Round Competition Format:

- 15-minute presentation
- 10-minute Q & A

All times are strictly enforced—once the buzzer sounds, teams and judges must immediately stop speaking.

- c. Slide Decks:** It is required for all teams to send their slide deck prior to the competition to amy.jones@umanitoba.ca .Slide decks are required to be in PowerPoint Format.
- d. How to Name your Slide Deck:** Each slide deck sent in should be named in the following format **SD_VentureName_UniversityName.pptx**
- e. Other:**
- Prototypes, iPhone apps etc. are allowed in the presentation.
 - All slide decks will be loaded into the teams presenting rooms and teams are provided a clicker. There will be an AV specialist in the room to assist with audio etc.
 - A hard stop means that as soon as the timer in the room rings the bell, the individual must stop speaking immediately.
 - Teams may only videotape or record their own presentation.
 - Only members who are actively present can participate in the Q & A discussion.
 - Teams are allowed to watch other teams present.
 - Each room will be assigned a moderator and a timer. The timer will hold up timecards to indicate how much time remains at different intervals.